

SPEAKER'S PRESCRIPTION DRUG ACTION TEAM  
LONG ISLAND SOUND CAUCUS  
NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE  
COMPONENTS CAUCUS  
CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S CAUCUS  
CONGRESSIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM CAUCUS  
PORT SECURITY CAUCUS  
CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES



**CONGRESSMAN ROB SIMMONS**  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
SECOND DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

February 4, 2004

The Honorable Michael Powell  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Powell:

*Michael:*

Like millions of other Americans who tuned in to watch the Super Bowl on Sunday night, I was appalled at the vulgar and explicit display during the half-time performance. Countless families across America gathered around their television to watch a fantastic matchup between two talented and determined teams in what has been dubbed as our nation's largest "secular holiday." Unfortunately, the Panthers and Patriots efforts were overshadowed and marred by a crass "strip tease" sponsored by Music Television (MTV). I hope you'll agree the performance --- witnessed by nearly one hundred million Americans -- fell well short of the standards of the National Football League, CBS, and, most assuredly, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

For these reasons, I strongly urge you to initiate an FCC investigation to determine whether or not the culminating event to the performance was planned and known about by top MTV and CBS officials. Additionally, I ask that you use this unfortunate event to demonstrate to the networks that the FCC will not tolerate any such further displays by levying and enforcing collection of the highest possible fines on CBS and MTV.

Assertions by MTV and CBS officials that they were as surprised as other viewers to see the offensive finale are unconvincing. As you may know, MTV posted a story on its website immediately following the performance, no doubt previously prepared, that detailed a spectacle that caused "jaws across the country to hit the carpet" and "rocked the Super Bowl to its core." Not surprisingly, this article was removed quickly from the website after widespread negative reaction to the show.

Chairman Powell, the people in my congressional district are fed up with the growing indecency that seems to have taken over our television programming. While stiffer fines and sharper enforcement of regulations are certainly in order, I fear that we have a more fundamental challenge with regard to the lack of quality programming on our networks. The continuing consolidation of media ownership among a handful of companies is directly tied to declining standards of decency, localism, and diversity. As long as these few control the broad majority of content, I fear that the fierce competition for the most sensational and shocking programs will only worsen.

I hope that CBS, MTV, and the other networks will, with your help and enforcement, take this incident as a wake-up call that the American people will not tolerate such indecent programming to be broadcast any more.

All the best,

*Thanks so much!*

Rob Simmons  
Member of Congress  
Second District, Connecticut